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ABSTRACT

This article reviews some of the research literature dealing with factors which contribute to success in acquiring second language speaking skills. Language attitudes, cognitive style variables (i.e., field dependence and independence; overgeneralization and negative transfer from the native language), personality variables (tolerance of ambiguity, extroversion, and empathy), general strategies and specific techniques are discussed. The question is raised as to whether the more successful second language learner is better able to avoid interference from his native language. Various avoidance strategies such as topic avoidance, semantic avoidance, paraphrase, and language switch are mentioned. The article also discusses future avenues for both large-scale and case study research. It is suggested that the language learner be used as an informant when analyzing the reasons for learners' errors. It is proposed, in conclusion, that such research might be channeled to activities emplicitly intended to produce better language learners. (Author)

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SUCCESSFUL SECOND-LANGUAGE SPEAKERS: A REVIEW OF RESEARCH LITERATURE[1]

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Under normal conditions, everyone learns to speak his native language. Yet there are people who never really learn to speak another language, even after years of exposure to it. Perhaps out of a belief that the key to success in language learning was the teacher, research over the years has dealt primarily with effective teaching methodologies (e.g., the pattern practice approach vs. the cognitive code approach). More recently, the language *learner* has begun to receive more attention from researchers, particularly with respect to the process of language learning (see, for example, Jakobovits, 1970; Oller & Richards, 1973; Richards, 1974; Schumann & Stenson, 1974). Although success in speaking is undoubtedly related to success in listening, reading, and writing, there seem to be significant differences. Speaking taxes not only a person's cognitive abilities, as do the other skills, but also his personality in ways that the other skills do not. For example, a learner may be able to make do with only partial comprehension of what someone says or writes in order to respond appropriately, and may, with the help of a dictionary or some other authoritative source, write an intelligible note to someone. However, on the spur of the moment, it may not be so easy to speak intelligibly.

This paper is primarily intended as a review of the recent literature dealing with factors influencing successful learning of speaking skills

1 I would like to thank Bob Cooper, Shoshana Blum, John Schumann, Joan Rubin, Eddie Levenston, and Rafi Nir for their helpful comments in the preparation of this paper.

in a second language. Then some suggestions for further research are offered. Research on factors conducive to successful second-language speaking may yield a set of general strategies and specific techniques that are teachable. In other words, perhaps it is possible to train potentially poor speakers to adopt habits that will make them more successful. It may be that too much time has been devoted to teaching people how to teach and too little time to teaching people how to be better learners. Thus, the potential teachability of successful strategies constitutes the underlying rationale for this review of the literature and for the suggestions concerning subsequent research in this area.

I. Researching Attitude Variables in Second-Language Speaking

In a book entitled *Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning*, Gardner & Lambert (1972) summarized 12 years of their research on attitudinal and motivational factors in language learning. Their studies generally involved the collection of data on a number of attitudinal, motivational, intelligence, and achievement variables from high school students and their parents. These data were then subjected to factor analysis in order to identify the patterning of relationships among the variables. In three of their studies conducted in the United States, the relationship of speaking fluency to other variables was, at best, elusive. For example, in a study of 168 first and second-year high school French students in Lousiana, "free speech" was not related to aptitude or intelligence, nor to most other measures of achievement in French. The authors remarked, "Although we presume that less emphasis is given to the development of oral skills in the Louisiana schools included in our study, this does not explain the individual differences among Louisiana students that do show up on the measures of oral skill" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 35). Then, in a study of 145 1st-3rd year high school French students in Maine, free speech *did* factor with other language achievement measures such

as reading. Finally, in a Connecticut study of 142 1st and 3rd-year high school French students, free speech once again did not factor together with other language achievement measures. However, free speech accuracy was associated with a lack of social inquisitiveness and bias toward American ways. On the basis of these conflicting results, the authors conclude:

> We would need a much more extensive set of personality and attitude indices to adequately interpret this complex cluster, though there are indications in this setting at least that the development of certain expressive skills calls for some type of constricted personality structure. (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 51) ... configurations of personality traits might prove in time to be another independent dimension of importance. (p. 55)

2. A Multi-Faceted Research Report on the Good Language Learner

The Modern Language Center of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education recently issued a 400-page document entitled *The Good Language Learner*, which reports on the first 1-2 years of a five-year study of effective teaching and learning (Naiman, Fröhlich, & Stern, 1975). Their investigation of the good language learner was prompted by observational work that Joan Rubin had been doing in an effort to derive a list or strategies of good language learners (Rubin, 1975). Rubin has subsequently elaborated on her original categories, operationalizing them at a more behavioral, observable level (Rubin, 1976). Drawing on Rubin's earlier work, Stern derived his own list of strategies of good language learners (Stern, 1975), which marked a starting point for the Naiman *et al.* (1975) effort.

In many ways, the Naiman *et al.* report is moving in the direction of disentangling some of the complex personality and attitudinal factors in language learning to which Gardner & Lambert had referred above.

Naiman *et al.* identified and operationalized in their research selected personality dimensions (intolerance of ambiguity, extroversion, empathy, and sensitivity to rejection) as well as cognitive style dimensions (field independence, category-width, and cognitive interference; see 3.1 and 3.2 below). They also utilized a revision by Gardner & Smythe (1975) of the attitudinal measures used previously by Gardner & Lambert. Naiman *et al.* then added a number of classroom-observation variables and variables derived from student interviews, over half of which dealt with student attitudes toward the language learning experience in the classroom.

Specifically, the Naiman *et al.* study included the following: (1) interviews with 32 successful and 2 unsuccessful adult language learners, (2) in-depth case studies of 5 of these learners (including that of an anthropology professor who had studied 32 languages), (3) a content analysis of questionnaires filled out by 85 language teachers regarding 113 good language learners and 95 poor ones, and (4) a study of language learning by 24 beginning (8th grade), 24 intermediate (10th grade) and 24 fairly advanced (12th grade) students of French. The students were administered two criterion measures, a listening comprehension test and a sentence imitation test (intended as a measure of speaking grammar)[2]. The students also took a battery of tests measuring cognitive style and personality, were observed in their classrooms, and were interviewed individually. The students' teachers were also interviewed. The research report included both statistical findings of a descriptive and correlational nature, and detailed discussions of specific aspects, including case studies of six of the 72 students.

The Naiman *et al.* report did provide much of the supplementary information on the role of *attitudes in language learning* that Gardner

2 In order to score the Imitation Task, the sentences were divided into a number of basic syntactic units. The score consisted of the ratio of entire units repeated correctly to the total number of units in the sentence. For example, in "Je/lui/montre des images/dans le livre", if the student said "dans *la* livre", the whole unit would be marked wrong.

& Lambert (1972) had deemed important. On the basis of both content analysis of interviews with language learners and statistical correlation between attitudinal variables and achievement, the investigators suggest that the way in which the learner perceives his individual learning situation is more predictive of success than other attitudinal variables that have been reported in the literature. Naiman *et al.* attribute importance to the learner's general attitude toward the learning situation, and his attitude toward more specific classroom events, such as the extent to which the teacher interrupts the student's efforts at speaking in order to correct errors, the extent to which the teacher uses the learner's first language in the classroom, and so forth.

Administering of cognitive style and personality tests to language learners, as Naiman *et al.* did, can be considered exploratory in that by and large such tests have until now been used primarily for other purposes. In other words, the effectiveness of such measures in assessing characteristics of language learners is still in need of empirical validation.

3. Researching Cognitive Style Variables in Second-Language Learning

3.1 Field Dependence vs. Field Independence

3.1.1 *Personality Studies*

A cognitive measure to distinguish field dependent from field independent learners, the Embedded Figures Test, was administered by Naiman *et al.* to their teenage sample to see whether the construct of field independence had validity for language learners. In theory, the field independent learner would be expected to focus only on those language stimuli relevant to the language learning task at hand, while the field dependent learner would be dependent on the entire stimulus field. The investigators gave the learners a sentence repetition task, and looked for whether those individuals identified on the cognitive measure as being more field independent would also be more selective

in the segments of language that they omitted than the more field dependent learners. They found their hypothesis to be supported statistically. For example, in a sentence like:

La maman de mon ami m'a donné son beau manteau rouge.

Field independent learners were more likely to repeat everything but the *m'* indirect object pronoun, while the field dependent learners were more likely to omit items in large segments, repeating only *la maman de mon ami*.

The researchers also found that the field dependent learners were more distracted by immediate field stimuli than were field independent learners. For example, they would say, "Quekqu'un nous *avons* raconté..." rather than "Quelqu'un nous *a* raconté..." because of distraction caused by the *nous* in juxtaposition to *a*.

Naiman *et al.* found that field independence as measured by the Hidden Figures Tests correlated significantly with both criterion measures, the listening comprehension test ($r=.31$, $p<.01$) and the imitation test ($r=.25$, $p<.05$). Tucker, Hamayan, & Genesee (1975) also administered an embedded figures test to English-speaking junior high school students enrolled in three types of French language programs: early French immersion, late French immersion, and more traditional French-as-a-second-language programs respectively ("immersion" implying French as the medium of instruction; see Cohen & Swain, 1976). The Tucker *et al.* measure of field independence, empirically grouped into a factor with several attitudinal variables, was a significant predictor of high achievement on the *Test de Rendement en Français*, a test of French speaking, listening comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar.

3.1.2 *Linguistic Studies*

Research into second language learning is also placing increasingly more emphasis on the cognitive processes underlying the speaking *errors* that learners make, specifically with respect to whether errors are either a result of negative transfer from the native language or a

result of overgeneralizations of inappropriate target-language rules (see Richards, 1974). Taylor (1975) reports research evidence from a study of 80 Spanish-speaking adult learners of English that, whereas both elementary and intermediate learners of English generally make more overgeneralization errors than transfer errors, the intermediate learners actually make proportionately more overgeneralization errors than the elementary learners. Topulos (1974) concluded from a study of 45 junior high and university students of French that intermediate learners were more likely to overgeneralize regular verb inflections to irregular verbs than were beginners. She found that beginners relied more on guesses — a form of overgeneralization not clearly based on existing rules but rather on a simple form of surface analogy. For example, whereas the intermediate student might say *nous *allerons* instead of *nous irons*, out of analogy to regular verbs (e.g., *nous chanterons*), the beginning student would create, for example, past participles for irregular verbs by shortening a given form — e.g., *j'ai *pre* instead of *j'ai pris*; *j'ai *boi* instead of *j'ai bu*[3].

In an analysis of oral interviews administered by learners of French to a supposedly monolingual French speaker, Powell (1973, 1975) found that students with high academic aptitudes, grade point averages, and foreign language grades also tended to overgeneralize the masculine of the adjectives to feminine nouns. These results by Powell, as well as those of Taylor and Topulos, suggest that, in the face of uncertainty, both *more advanced* second-language students (and the more successful learners among these) may consciously or unconsciously resort more to overgeneralization or false analogy within the target language and less to negative transfer from their native language or to lower-level guessing than *beginners*, especially the poorer learners from among the beginners.

3 Topulos doesn't refer to "gussing" as overgeneralization at all, yet she does suggest that such forms as ** pre* were formed by analogy to the great majority of past participles which do end in a vowel. Thus, such a form is still an overgeneralization. I would suggest that it is perhaps a lower-level overgeneralization in that such forms need not resemble existing French forms nor follow any existing rules.

3.2 Overgeneralization and Interference

3.2.1 *Category-width*

The Naiman *et al.* study administered cognitive style measures intended to tap both the propensity to overgeneralize and to transfer from the first language, and then to relate the results to the criterion measures of good language learning (listening comprehension and imitation). They used as a test of overgeneralization Pettigrew's Category-Width Scale. The task called for categorization of items, wherein the respondent risked either making the categories too broad by including items that didn't belong or making the categories too narrow by eliminating items that did belong. The researchers related this information to language learning in that successful language learners were expected to be the middle-of-the-roaders who neither generalized too much nor too little. They found that performance on this measure did not correlate significantly with performance on their criterion measures, listening comprehension ($r = -.10$) and sentence imitation ($r = -.04$). But in light of the findings of researchers such as Taylor, Topulos, and Powell, perhaps Naiman *et. al.* should have reanalysed the data, looking to see whether *overgeneralizers* were better language learners. Their data from interviews with learners do, in fact, support the notion that the better speakers concentrate on developing the additional language into a separate reference system and try to think in it (an approach that may be more conducive to overgeneralization errors than to transfer errors), while referring back to their native language only judiciously (positive transfer from the first language) (Naiman *et al.*, pp. 52-54).

3.2.2. *Speed of Color Discrimination*

Cognitive interference or transfer of habits was assessed by Naiman *et al.* through the use of Messick's Speed of Color Discrimination Test. The test sets up a conflict situation between a stronger habit (reading color names on cards) and a weaker habit (naming colors on cards). The test was thought to relate to language learning in that the language learner has to resist the influence of the first language (negative transfer)

when learning the second language. The learner has to accommodate to and develop a new and revised set of language responses that may map over or complement previously learned sets (see Stockwell, Bowen, & Martin, 1967, pp. 282-285). Particularly on the basis of Taylor's findings mentioned above, it may be thought that the successful language learner would perform better on such a test of cognitive interference than the poorer ones. However, Naiman *et al.* found no significant relationship between performance on this test and performance on the listening comprehension test ($r=.06$) or imitation task ($r=.06$).

4. Researching Personality Variables in Second-Language Learning

4.1 Tolerance of Ambiguity

Although the number of different personality dimensions is endless and the nomenclature for referring to seemingly similar traits is not always consistent, several dimensions in particular have begun to receive attention in the research literature. For example, "tolerance of ambiguity", as measured by Walk's Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale, was used by Naiman *et al.* as one of their personality measures. They found that tolerance of ambiguity correlated significantly with listening comprehension ($r= -.26$, $p<.05$) ,but not significantly with imitation, intended to tap speaking ability ($r= -.23$). The results of the first correlation would suggest that the more proficient classroom listeners are those who are most able to cope with ambiguity, i.e., novelty, complexity, or unsolubility. According to the investigators, more intolerant learners may react to ambiguity in a language learning situation with dislike, depression, or avoidance behaviors.

4.2 Extroversion

Another dimension receiving attention is that of "extroversion" Naiman *et al.* administered a form of introversion-extroversion measure based on Eysenck's scale (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1963). They found

that extroversion did not correlate significantly with the criterion measures. However, the investigators also obtained data on extroversion from direct observation of the same students in the classroom and from subsequent interviews with the students themselves. As it turned out, the impressions of the investigators did *not* corroborate the results of the extroversion scale. Thus, if we could consider the observations and interviews as reliable indices of extroversion, then for some reason the Eysenck Extraversion Scale was not a valid measure of this trait as related to language learning. Rossier (1975), however, *did* find a statistically significant relation between extroversion and oral fluency among 50 12th-grade English-as-a-second-language students, using a Spanish version of the Eysenck Extraversion-Introversion Scale and a Pictorial Stimulus Task as a measure of English speaking. It should be noted that this significant correlation was actually a partial correlation in that Rossier statistically controlled for IQ, general educational attainment, grade point average, and time spent studying in the United States.

Tucker *et al.* (1975) administered the Junor-Senior High Personality Questionnaire to junior high school students in various types of French programs (as discussed above), in order to obtain a general assessment of personality. The researchers statistically derived four trait-factors considered of relevance to language learning: assertiveness, emotional stability (self-control), adventuresomeness, and conscientiousness. These four traits were in turn combined into a single factor which was found to predict success in speaking French among the students in the Late French Immersion Program (seventh grade). Although no separate analysis was performed for each of these traits, the researchers note the value of "teasing apart the diverse components of the four composite predictors used in this study". The reader will note that except for "conscientiousness", the Tucker *et al.* traits are commonly associated with extroversion.

4.3 Empathy

The dimension of "empathy" has also been investigated with regard to successful language learning. Naiman *et al.*, selected Hogan's Empathy Scale to see whether the successful learner was more willing to put himself in another person's place and to modify his behavior after having exposed himself to an opposing point of view. This measure did not, however, correlate at all with the speaking (r=.02) or listening (r=.01) measures, nor with other language learning variables in the study. Guiora *et al.* (1975), on the other hand, have obtained some indication that empathy, measured through more complex and time-consuming means (including judges' ratings of reactions to facial expressions, reactions to pictures, and responses to literary passages), may be related at least to pronunciation accuracy. The researchers suggest that the more empathetic learner can shed his native pronunciation habits more readily and temporarily adopt different ones, but Schumann (1975) points out that their results to date are actually quite mixed.

5. General Strategies and Specific Techniques in Second-Language Learning

Along with the literature on attitudinal configurations, cognitive style, and personality measures as related to second-language learning, there is also a less clearly defined area of strategies and techniques employed by successful learners. Naiman *et al.* define "strategy" as a general, overall characteristic of the approach used by a learner, consciously or unconsciously ; (e.g., developing L2 into a separate reference system and learning to think in it). They define "technique" as an observable language learning behavior, more or less consciously employed by the learner (e.g., putting vocabularly words into different structures and drilling oneself). Their study generated a host of general strategies and specific techniques of good language learners, as derived from interviews with adult and teenage learners and from interviews with the teachers of the teenagers.

Based on adult accounts of personal success or failure in second language learning, Naiman *et al.* suggest that the best way to learn a language might be through a combination of fairly structured formal instruction and simultaneous immersion in the area where the language is spoken. There appeared to be consensus among learners that length of exposure alone does not determine achievement and retention — that much depends on the personality of the individual, as well as on his attitudes toward the learning experience, especially toward language teachers. One-third of the respondents regarded "sociability" as an important factor in language learning. Perhaps a quarter of them indicated that being extroverted facilitated acquiring speaking skills. The adults indicated that choosing native speakers as friends or lovers or as companions on trips, were among the more successful means of acquiring fluency in a language. One respondent noted that he sought out native-speaking children because he didn't feel embarrassed speaking with them. At least one teenage learner noted that he tried to answer every question that the teacher asked, regardless of whether it was directed at him. Then he compared his answer to the one that another student or the teacher gave.

6. Research Directions for the Future

The field of successful second-language speaking seems to lend itself nicely both to large-scale and to case study research. Descriptive longitudinal research can be conducted profitably on a small-scale basis, as much of the language acquisition literature has attested to. Although ostensibly of limited generalizability, case studies sometimes provide categories for larger-scale work. For example, R. Brown's (1973) work with three native speakers of English in the early stages of acquisition led to larger-scale studies investigating whether non-native children (Dulay & Burt, 1974) and adults (Bailey, Madden & Krashen, 1974; Freeman, 1975) acquire English morphemes in a similar order.

There are advantages to large-scale studies, particularly when trying to correlate attitudes, cognitive style, personality, and age with successful language learning. With regard to personality dimensions, there is still much that can be done to further validate already conspicuous constructs such as tolerance of ambiguity, extroversion, and empathy, as well as to explore the importance of other dimentions, e.g., patience, concentration, sense of humor, and others.

There is also much room for research relating cognitive style to successful learning, particularly concerning the relationship of propensity to overgeneralize or transfer negatively and good language learning. Since both the Category-Width Scale and the Speed of Color Discrimination Test have an extensive literature supporting their validity as measures of the tendency to overgeneralize and of cognitive interference respectively (see Naiman *et al.*, 1975, pp. 131-136), perhaps future investigations should relate performance on these measures to performance on a criterion measure other than sentence imitation (Naiman *et al.*, 1975). Perhaps these measures of cognitive style should be related to errors reliably attributed to overgeneralization or transfer in free speech. Is it really true, for instance, that the more successful second-language speaker is quicker to judiciously avoid negative transfer errors than the poorer learner ? Does the better learner likewise avoid under- and overgeneralization ? These are issues for further investigation.

H.D. Brown (1973) suggests additional cognitive style dimensions as potentially related to successful language learning, namely reflective-impulsive thinking (calculated decision making vs. quick guessing), skeleton-embroidering (simplification vs. addition in order to retain the original details), and belief congruence-contradiction (the ability to store contradictory information, as in the case of seeming rule violations). It may be necessary to construct cognitive measures to tap these dimensions, where such instruments do not exist at present.

It is also possible that a cognitive process of avoidance contributes in some instances to successful speaking — by sustaining rather than

interrupting the speech flow (Tarone, Cohen & Dumas, 1976). Such behaviors might include : (1) changing the topic or indulging in semantic avoidance, i.e., presupposing of the listener certain information about the topic in order to avoid phonological, morphological, syntactic, or lexical forms that the speaker doesn't know or is unsure of, (2) paraphrasing, or (3) switching to the native language for a word or phrase. It would be necessary to attempt to validate such hunches empirically, perhaps on a case-study basis initially to determine the most productive way of tapping such dimensions, before trying a large-scale project. As part of their learner observation schedules, Naiman *et al.* (1975) had a category called "circumlocution". They hypothesized that good learners would indulge in circumlocution more than less successful learners. Unfortunately, the observers were unable to detect instances of this behavior in the classroom. These results would suggest either that the classroom environment is not the appropriate context in which to observe such circumlocution (e.g., because students don't talk enough) or that circumlocution is better observed in out-of-class situations. It may be necessary to use the speaker himself as informant to verify whether he was using circumlocution, since some circumlocution may be quite subtle.

Using the learner as informant, both in this instance and in general, may be profitable in future research. In a study of three Chinese learners of English, Cohen & Robbins (1976) found that error explanations from the learners provided useful insights concerning the production of errors. In that study, "interlanguage background" [4] (namely, past language experiences, current language environment, and language learning strategies) was related to learners' explanations of errors in various kinds of written work over several months of English-as-a

4 "Interlanguage" is a term introduced by Selinker (1972) to refer to the language system that the second-language learner creates based on the data he is exposed to. This interlanguage shares properties with both the mother tongue and the target language, but is hypothesized as a separate linguistic system accounting for actual realized utterances.

second-language instruction. Quite frequently the learners' explanations were different from the interpretations which the investigators had put on the errors. For example, one learner had developed a rule for using the present tense that was systematic but incorrect (Corder, 1974), namely, that a statement of fact is always in the present tense. Thus, when describing a gift given to her father 20 years prior to the English course, she wrote, "...it is a frame which contained only a dried up leaf". The system or rationale for such errors can perhaps only be revealed through such interviews with the learner as informant.

Perhaps an ideal way to do longitudinal case study work with several language learners would be some combination of (1) observation of the learners speaking in a variety of contexts, both formal and informal, structured and unstructured; (2) interviews with the learners about general strategies and specific techniques that they use, as well as interpretations of the underlying processes or explanations for certain forms they produce (e.g., overgeneralization of target language rules or forms inappropriate in this case, negative transfer from the native language the learner knows, etc.); (3) elicitation tasks of various kinds (imitation, translation, structured substitutions, storytelling, free speech, etc.), followed up by learner explanations of his performance; and (4) the keeping of a detailed ongoing log of language learning experiences by the learner, ideally with entries on a weekly basis. Through this kind of longitudinal work, it may become clearer how the learner acquires rules in another language. Does he move directly to total mastery of a rule? If so, which ones? Which rules are learned only with great difficulty? What kinds of incorrect rules are learned? What rules are learned correctly, but are violated out of carelessness, memory lapse, or uncertainty?

Another line of investigation has to do with the learner's language repertoire in general. For example, perhaps his training in his native language, particularly in grammar, has a direct bearing on his ability to speak the target language. Also, his cognitive style may be reflected in how he speaks his native language -- e.g., possibly he uses circum-

locution and is tolerant of ambiguity in his native language as well. Also, the number of languages and varieties of languages (e.g., different dialects and levels of formality within each) in which the learner has a degree of speaking skill may have a significant effect upon his speaking of the target language. For example, an English speaker who knows Spanish well may, in speaking Hebrew, use /kartisim/ 'tickets', when he actually means /mixtavim/ 'letters', because the word for "postal letters" in Spanish, *cartas*, interferes. Thus, the ways in which a speaker's additional languages help and hinder his learning to speak the target language is itself a topic for research.

Perhaps the only certainty with respect to unraveling the mysteries of what makes someone a successful speaker of another language is that there is no *one* configuration of characteristics resulting in a good language learner. The Naiman *et al.* report provides, as mentioned above, various lists of strategies and techniques of successful learners, as reported by teachers and by the learners themselves. The investigators indicate that by and large the learners seemed to provide more accurate, useful descriptions than the teachers. They felt that teachers provided little more than stereotypic notions (e.g., successful learners are "mature", "self-confident", and "perfectionists")[5], and speculated that perhaps teachers were concentrating more on teaching and curriculum than on the characteristics of learners in their classes (which is perfectly reasonable to expect).

While the content analysis of responses by learners in interview format may not have yielded many "new" insights into language learning, from the perspective of the researchers, it at least helped provide some frequency counts regarding the popularity of various well-known strategies and techniques. Naiman *et al.* indicate that a critical, exhaustive, and non-redundant inventory of strategies and techniques would be useful, both for teachers and for future research

5 It may even be that a perfectionist is not always, or even necessarily, a successful language learner when it comes to certain aspects of learning — e.g., speaking conversationally.

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purposes. The likelihood that a technique is employed by a given "successful" language learner probably varies according to the learning method — e.g., formal classroom instruction, formal self-study, formal study concurrent with informal learning (e.g., immersion), informal learning alone, and various combinations of more artificial and more naturalistic language learning contexts. Without question, the importance of these and other techniques in successful language learning is still in need of empirical validation.

The idea that such language learning techniques are teachable is intriguing. Naiman *et al.* suggest that "occasional hints from the teacher, or periodically, brief exchanges with the students about different ways of learning would change classroom language learning from a fairly mechanical routine into a more deliberate cooperative undertaking" (p. 372). Perhaps experience will show that certain strategies or techniques are more teachable than others. We may find that more time could profitably be spent teaching people how to learn to speak a language, possibly by providing for them some kind of "how to" manual.

It could be that some so-called "poor" learners become good learners through such coaching, just as people are able to develop a more "powerful" vocabulary in their native language through books and can learn to write more cohesive term papers through study-skills manuals. With respect to language learning, specifically speaking, coaching might include training in the use of paraphrase in order to keep the speech flow going even in the face of difficult forms or structures. Such training might also include practice in inferring the meaning of a form or utterance or in inferring grammatical rules by analogy. Perhaps learners could even be taught effective means of classifying and storing information about the language they are learning.

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תנאי ההצלחה ברכישת מיומנויות שיחה בלשון שנייה
סקירה של ספרות המחקר

אנדרו כהן

מאמר זה סוקר בחלקו את המחקר בגורמים הקובעים הצלחה ברכישת מיומנויות שיחה בלשון שנייה. גישות ללימוד לשון, סגנון קוגניטיבי ('תלוי-שדה' ו'בלתי תלוי בשדה'; הכללת-יתר והתערבות לשון האם) גורמי אישיות (רמת הסובלנות ביחס לערפול, אקסטרוברטיות ואמפתיה) וכן אסטרטגיות כלליות וטכניקות ספציפיות הם בין הגורמים הנידונים במאמר.

כמו כן כולל המאמר דיון בכיווני מחקר לעתיד, הן באשר למחקרים בקנה מידה רחב והן באשר למחקרים המתרכזים בפרט. מוצע להקדיש תשומת לב לכמה משתנים של סגנון קוגניטיבי, כגון לשאלה אם לומד הלשון המצליח יותר עולה על עמיתו המצליח פחות בפיתוח יכולת להימנע משגיאות הנובעות מהתערבות לשון האם. תשומת הלב מוסבת לתופעת ההימנעות בכללותה (כגון עקיפת הנושא; הימנעות סימנטית, פרפראזה, מעבר מלשון ללשון) ולדרך ניצולה בידי הלומדים הטובים יותר. כמו כן, מוצעת במאמר דרך לשימוש בלומד הלשון כ'אינפורמנט', המספק ידע על תהליכי הלימוד שלו עצמו. לבסוף, נידונה השאלה אם ניתן להורות טכניקות לימוד המבטיחות הצלחה בלימוד לשון שנייה.